



L I F E

P R O C E S S E S



B Y

A N N

M E N E B R O K E R



GRACE AND SHIRLEY

The women stand in a green garden
holding up two gold squash,
their long hair falling down
upon their shoulders
against the rise of plants.
Wild bushes behind them;
whatever the sky has left
pierces through at leafy angles.
Blue is not very ominous
against the garden growers
who have planted, picked
and now hold their product
like limited suns
taken from the vine at will.

ANSWERS

thank you for letting me know
you would rather I wouldn't

thank you for billing me on this item

thank you for inviting me to your party
I can't come

thank you for letting me know
where I made the mistake

thank you for inviting me
to your book reception

thank you for the price by the dozen

thank you for sending me the instructions

thank you for the dinner and the movie
and the other stuff

thank you for the present
which was just what I wanted

thank you for calling to let me
know you will be late

thank you for the green dress
that is now too large for you

thank you for letting me know
you have been ill

thank you for the tickets to the
saturday night concert

thank you for asking me to participate

thank you for letting me know so soon

thank you for telling me this is not
exactly what you are looking for

thank you for answering

MIGRATIONS

i have been out late again
surrounded by people
who seem to know me
and regard me with less
than a skeptical eye

you say we are all
a little mad
drinking and carrying on
with our poems
egos on the sun
that sets and rises
within our own horizons

and i say yes
i suppose it is true
birds of a feather
et cetera

suddenly i feel
like another extinct
species
that only became rare
through dying

POSTURE OF LOVE

Standing in such
a tall position

feet pointed
arms by the side

the profile
so bravely correct

like a dancer
before the curtain rises.

The eerie remembrance
of propriety

like Aunt Alice
in her white lace house.

Feel fat and ordinary
and slip a little;

think of running naked
through an African forest.

Touch someone on the breast
and by the neck.

Sleep with someone you love.
Talk till morning.

Move before the music begins
to keep it from being a

performance.

A ROUND OF ONES

at Peter Pan's
he takes a dollar from his boot
& buys 2 glasses of beer
she drinks one
& he drinks one

others drink one
a round of ones
as long as there are more
than one
gathered

we can take ourselves
a little seriously

TREE SNAKES

please, come into my
rooms, pick up the books,
look at the paintings,
steal an ash tray or
a poem to remember me by;
notice how I arrange
things, listen to the
stereo, stay late
when the candles are lit
and the incense burning,
watch our performance
when the wine makes us
sensuous and the darkness
gives us a new courage,
listen to the magic snakes
hissing in the trees
waiting to strike

A POEM TO CARRY AROUND SO YOU WON'T
FORGET WHERE YOU ARE GOING WHEN IT IS
VITAL TO REMEMBER

schedule:

the boat
leaving for alaska
is bound for alaska
ending in nome
where a return flight
will take you back
to your point
of departure
from where you left
to go to alaska
before you left
for alaska

FOCUS

the scene is the ocean
and a wave of it
slapping against a small boat
knocking out a father
and his two children
curtain down
green and green and green
the performers
will not come up
for a curtain call

POEM TO THE MAN ON THE WALL

In Paris in 1928
some unknown artist
did a pencil sketch
of a young man.
Now it hangs
in a house many
thousands of miles
away from Paris;
it hangs over a
Lester piano
built in 1907.
It hangs on a
bright yellow wall
in a house
where no one knew
him very well.
All I can accurately
remember about him
is that he said
'motoring' instead
of 'driving'
and he had a cook and
a maid and once
when I ate at his house
he served cold soup
with a fancy name,
but it didn't make
it taste any better.

I BUY A BOOK BY TILlich, THINK OF ONE WHO CARES,
AND WRITE A POEM

he is yours for now
all caught up
in your newness

he finds you terribly interesting
and a little crazy
he takes you to lunch
for drinks
a dinner or two
he cannot help it
and there is no one to blame
for these feelings

he thinks of you
calls you
and you tell him you love him
there is a lot going on

I lose sleep
and spirit
and simply keep growing old
but I am a tough old bitch
there are no grudges
I know how things work with people
it is all open between us
all very civilized
what hurts is
that I cannot become
twelve years younger
he tells me he loves you
but differently than he loves me
and he assures me
all is well

oh christ oh christ
how's that for an ending

COMPARISON BY CONTRAST

describe, said the contest
chairman, in as few words
as possible, a fourteen line limit,
who you are
without using your
physical appearance
birth statistics, hobbies
occupation, or sex:

Jane
Goodall

Is
Probably

Un-
afraid

Of
The

Dentist
Or

Death
Or

Lonely
People

INCEPTION

i am not saying
we have not had our moments
i am saying
we need more of them
each different from the first
nothing neat or concise
nothing planned to capture
our primitive moods
just a happening of sorts
disassociated from
itineraries
just the urgency
of you and i
needing what the other is
and giving it

DEADLY CURE

why do you deny yourself
being alive?

the steady drone of bees
spills out of your eyes

you are a worker
educated to caution
conservative as a bow tie

who has told you
this is the way of the world?
who has drawn the map?

nightly i dream of magic
and its invasion

only to find the world
has discovered another vaccine

-- Ann Menebroker

Wilton CA